

## Illinois Campaign Financing Act

# Contribution Limits



Illinois State Board of Elections  
Campaign Disclosure Division  
Revised August 2021

*This brochure is not a complete or fully detailed digest, but an overview intended to help in understanding basic responsibilities under the law. Some of the language in this brochure is presented in simplified form, and should not be considered a substitute for applicable law.*

*For more complete and authoritative guidance concerning all areas of campaign financial disclosure, refer to actual statutory language and to the State Board of Elections Rules and Regulations. Consultation with professional legal counsel is also encouraged. Additionally, assistance from the State Board of Elections or other governmental authorities, where jurisdiction exists, is encouraged.*

Notwithstanding the other fundraising restrictions, most political committees face contribution limits that restrict the amount of money they can accept from various sources. These limits are determined by the type of committee receiving the contributions, as well as the source of the contributions. For more information about committee types, please refer to the committee designation section of the Guide to Campaign Disclosure.

Contribution limits are based on election cycles. For most types of committees, an election cycle equals a calendar year. However, for Candidate Political Committees, election cycles depend on the office being sought by the candidate supported by the committee. The table below can be compared with upcoming election dates available on our website:

	<b>First Cycle</b>	<b>Second Cycle</b>
<b>Candidate office elected at General Election/Primary</b>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> following a General Election in which candidate seeks office* through day of General Primary	Day after General Primary through December 31 <sup>st</sup> following a General Election in which candidate seeks office*
<b>Candidate office elected at Consolidated Election/Primary</b>	July 1 <sup>st</sup> following a Consolidated Election for which candidate seeks election through day of next Consolidated Primary for that office	Day after Consolidated Primary for office to which candidate seeks nomination or election through June 30 <sup>th</sup> following Consolidated Election held that year
<b>Candidate office seeking retention (Judicial Candidates)</b>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> following General Election when candidate was elected through day candidate files declaration of intent to seek retention	Day after declaration of intent filed through December 31 <sup>st</sup> following retention election
<b>Political Party and Political Action Committees</b>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> through December 31 <sup>st</sup>	No second cycle
<b>Ballot Initiative and Independent Expenditure Committees</b>	No limits therefore no cycles	No limits therefore no cycles

**\*Note:** Candidates seeking office in the General Assembly have their election cycle reset every general election regardless of participation.

The contribution limits, per election cycle, are as follows:

## Candidate Political Committee

Contribution Limit	Source	Notes
\$6,000	Individuals	Does not include self or immediate family members. See Self-funding below.
\$12,000	Corporation, labor organization, or association	Limit is tracked separately from a PAC controlled by any source in this category
\$59,900	Candidate Political Committee or Political Action Committee	
Unlimited	Political Party Committee	Except during an election cycle in which the candidate seeks nomination at a primary election. *

\*During an election cycle in which the candidate seeks nomination at a Primary Election the limits from a Political Party committee are as follows:

\$239,900	To a candidate for statewide constitutional office
\$150,000	To a candidate for the Illinois Senate, Supreme Court or Appellate Court in Cook County, County-wide offices in Cook County
\$90,000	To a candidate for the Illinois House, Supreme Court or Appellate Court outside Cook County, local offices within Cook County, or County-wide offices outside of Cook County
\$59,900	To any other candidate

A candidate for the General Assembly may only accept contributions from one Legislative Caucus Committee.

Contributions to a Candidate Political Committee from a Ballot Initiative Committee or Independent Expenditure Committee are prohibited at any time.

**Self-funding Candidates:** A candidate/public official or their immediate family members (spouse, parent or child) can make unlimited contributions to that public official or candidate's political committee. However, if these contributions total more than \$100,000 (\$250,000 for statewide constitutional offices) during the 12 months prior to an election the candidate is considered a "self-funding candidate" and must file the appropriate paperwork. A Notification of Self-funding details each contribution (including loans) made by the candidate or their immediate family and **must be filed within one day of passing the threshold.**

The Board will then post the notification on its website and give official notice to each candidate for the office in question, removing the normal contribution limits for those candidates. If the self-funding notification is filed during a primary election cycle, and the candidate who filed the notification is nominated at the primary election, the removal of contribution limits will carry over through the general or consolidated election cycle.

Additionally, if an individual or Independent Expenditure Committee makes independent expenditures supporting or opposing a particular candidate during an election cycle that total more than \$250,000 (for statewide offices) or \$100,000 (for all other offices), the individual or Independent Expenditure Committee must file a written disclosure with the State Board of Elections within 2 business days. The Board will then post the notification on its website and give official notice to each candidate for the office in question, removing the normal contribution limits for those candidates for the remainder of the election cycle.

Contribution limits may also be removed if the Board determines that an aggregate of independent expenditures by individuals and Independent Expenditure committees exceed the threshold levels listed above. In such a case, a similar notification will be posted on the Board's website and all affected candidates will be sent notice.

## Political Party Committee

Contribution Limit	Source	Notes
\$12,000	Individuals	
\$24,000	Corporation, labor organization, or association	Limit is tracked separately from a PAC controlled by any source in this category
\$59,900	Political Action Committee	
Unlimited	Political Party Committee or Candidate Political Committee	Contributions to a Legislative Caucus Committee from another Legislative Caucus Committee are prohibited.
Unlimited	Affiliated federal party committee established under the Federal Election Code by the same party	

Contributions to a Political Party Committee from a Ballot Initiative Committee or Independent Expenditure Committee are prohibited at any time.

## Political Action Committee

Contribution Limit	Source	Notes
\$12,000	Individuals	
\$24,000	Corporation, labor organization, association, or Political Party Committee	Member dues and similar assessments fall under a special "conduit rule" *
\$59,900	Political Action Committee or Candidate Political Committee	

Contributions to a Political Action Committee from a Ballot Initiative Committee or Independent Expenditure Committee are prohibited at any time.

\*A corporation, labor organization, association or a Political Action Committee established by one of those three

is allowed to act as a conduit to gather and deliver contributions (to a PAC) made through dues, levies or similar assessments. The group acting as the conduit must maintain a list of all the people or groups that paid the dues, levies or similar assessments. For reporting purposes, the Political Action Committee receiving the contributions can report the contributions as an aggregate total from the group, except that contributions from individual contributors that exceed \$500 in a reporting period cannot be reported in the aggregate and must be itemized instead, and provided that none of the contributions making up the total exceeds the normal contribution limits.

## Ballot Initiative Committee

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Unlimited from any source at any time.

Ballot Initiative Committees are unable to make contributions to any other type of political committee.

## Independent Expenditure Committee

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Unlimited from any source at any time.

Independent Expenditure Committees are unable to make direct contributions to candidates or committees, with the exception of other Independent Expenditure Committees or Ballot Initiative Committees. Independent Expenditure Committees are also unable to make coordinated expenditures (expenditures made in connection, consultation, or concert with or at the request or suggestion of a public official, candidate, committee, campaign or an agent of any of the aforementioned.)

### IMPORTANT!

A committee that receives a contribution in excess of the allowable limit must return the excess portion to the original contributor, or donate a like amount to charity. If this is done within 30 days of the Board sending notice to the committee about the excess contribution, no contribution limit violation will have occurred. Failure to dispose of the excess amount results in a contribution limit violation, requiring the committee to escheat the excess portion to the General Revenue Fund and subjecting the committee to a civil penalty of up to 150% of the excess contribution amount.

**NOTE:** Contribution limits for all types of committees will be adjusted for inflation by the State Board of Elections in odd-numbered years. Adjusted limits will be posted on the Board's website, at [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov).

For more information, complete guidelines, and rules and regulations as set forth by the State Board of Elections, write, call, FAX or e-mail the:

Illinois State Board of Elections  
2329 S MacArthur Blvd  
Springfield, IL 62704  
(217) 782-4141  
(800) 527-VOTE (8683)  
(217) 782-5959 (FAX)  
[webmaster@elections.il.gov](mailto:webmaster@elections.il.gov)

Illinois State Board of Elections  
69 West Washington St, Suite LL-08  
Chicago, IL 60602  
(312) 814-6440  
(800) 923-VOTE (8683)  
(312) 814-6485 (FAX)

Information including the law, rules and regulations, forms, calendar, and a glossary of terms may be obtained by accessing the State Board of Elections website at [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov).

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